



FIRST AND SUMMERFIELD CHURCH NEWS

FEBRUARY 2011

First and Summerfield United Methodist Church

425 College Street New Haven, CT 06511

Phone: 203-624-2521

Pastor: Rev. Sara Lamar-Sterling

Website: www.fsunc.org

Abraham's Tent: Home For a Night by Nancy Davis

After last year's Abraham's Tent experience, FSUMC member Nancy Davis wrote up an article about the experience for our newsletter. We reprint it here, with her permission. Thanks, Nancy!

Abraham's Tent was my home. It felt like a home. I looked forward to the men's arrival and missed them when they were gone. The men, our guests, gave more to me than I ever could to them.

For seven days, First and Summerfield was home for 8-12 men from Columbus House Inc., an overnight shelter located in New Haven. They entered by 6:15pm and left by 6:00am. First and Summerfield was one of many churches, in the Greater New Haven area, that took part in the Abraham's Tent Project. The entire project ran for 3 months from January through March. I was lucky enough to be able to be there for a 12 hour shift. And I mean "really lucky"!

I made my best chili for our guests. Addie made the corn bread right in the church kitchen. Modestine and her son Aaron brought the collard greens. Church members who were in other parts of the church for meetings came down to Trinity

Hall to help set-up and clean-up. Students from Yale were involved throughout the week. Scott and I were the hosts for the night and we all sat down together, as a family, for a meal.

Abraham's Tent gave me the opportunity to celebrate relationships, of all kinds.

Crew and Dennis came by and stayed to play cards with a few of us. Our guest Jerry, taught us the rules of spades with finesse and fun!

I got to talk more, laugh more and share more than I had ever imagined. I expected I would make acquaintances and socialize with other volunteers but I never knew what a wonderful and lasting effect it would have on me.

There were bonds formed in Abraham's Tent. New friendships were made and existing friendships strengthened. Isn't that what a relationship is...a bond created? Isn't that what being a Methodist means...to be in relationship with God and with each other?

Willis, another guest, found pleasure in shining his shoes after supper. Willis was a proud man. He took pride in his appearance and in the

shine on his shoes. I told Willis that the scent of the boot wax gave me a fond memory of my Dad's same pride in his clothes and shining his shoes until the house was permeated with a warm comforting scent. That memory was a gift from Abraham's Tent to me.

We shared meals, talked of work, life and kids. We played cards and shared many cups of coffee. Ice cream sandwiches were a treat while watching DVD's. I believe the best part for all of us was to relax, together, at the end of a long day.

I truly felt I had been given the gift of spending 12 hrs with my... "Family of choice".

What is home if not, Abraham's Tent?

- Nancy Davis

More Abe's Tent information is found on page 3 in this newsletter. Be informed and stay involved!

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Important Dates

- Sengbe Pieh, Feb. 6, 11:30am
- Abraham's Tent, Feb. 14-20

VALENTINE'S DAY



Happy Valentine's Day, Feb. 14th!

Snow Cancellations



Winter is upon us again. The snow cancellation policy for FSUMC is as follows:

If the City of New Haven declares a parking ban at the same time as a scheduled church event, the event will be cancelled. This includes Sunday Worship. Even if the parking ban is up at 10am, services will still be cancelled. Please refer to your local radio or television for more details on area weather closings.

2011 FSUMC Church Directory is available to church members electronically. If you haven't received your copy or need to request a printed version, please contact the church office. If you find that there are any changes necessary, please let us know.

Welcome New Members

New Members will be received into membership on Sunday, February 27th. If you'd like to become a member of FSUMC, please attend the New Members class on Sunday, February 20th at 11:30am in the Parlor, led by Pastor Sara and the Membership & Evangelism committee. Come find out what membership means in the UMC, learn more about FSUMC, and get to know some new folks, too. Please RSVP to Pastor Sara at revsara@sbcglobal.net.

Black College Luncheon March 5

The Luncheon will be held at the Crowne Plaza, White Plains, NY. Tickets are \$85/person. The guest speaker will be Dr. David Beckley, President of Rust College, Holly Springs, MS.

This annual event helps to support the 11 historically black colleges and universities of the UMC: Bennett, Bethune-Cookman, Claflin, Clark Atlanta, Dillard, Huston-Tillotson, Meharry Medical, Paine, Philander Smith, Rust, and Wiley.

Contact Rev. Hermon Darden for tickets, 914-668-3334.



DISCIPLE 2 Bible Study

We'll meet on Tuesdays at 7:05pm, beginning February 15th. Are you looking for a long-term Bible Study opportunity with others who are interested in a disciplined approach to scripture? Then "Disciple II: Into the Word, Into the World" is the Bible study for you. February 15 to November 2011, with a summer break. The group will meet on Tuesdays from 7:05pm to 9pm. Disciple II covers a detailed reading of Genesis and Exodus, and Luke and Acts of the Apostles--great books for a meaningful study. You can order your own participants book online at www.cokesbury.com. Or please bring \$36 (cash or check payable to FSUMC) to the first class on February 15th.

Thank you for the warmth - from CCA

Dear friends of CCA:

Thank you for your donation of hats, mittens, and scarves to Christian Community Action. By your tax-free donation, you have joined a large group of caring people who have chosen to share a little of their abundance with families that need the emergency services that CCA provides in New Haven.

Your support also helps us continue our mission of providing 'Help, Housing, and Hope' to families that are homeless in New Haven. This includes support for our Hillside Family Shelter, our Stepping Stone Transitional Housing Program.

We are very appreciative and grateful for your generosity. Thank you again.

Sincerely, Albert May (Director of Development, CCA)

Congratulations Hazel!

The New Haven Board of Education's Title One Program is honoring Hazel Pappas for her many years of devoted service with a dinner on Friday, February 18th, 6pm, at Biagetti's Restaurant, West Haven. Tickets are \$30.

RSVP's are needed by February 4th to Patricia Troxler, 29 Cave Street, New Haven, CT.

Congratulations, Hazel. We're so proud of you!

Baptism News

On Sunday, January 30th, weather permitting, we welcomed Janae Callens into the household of faith with the sacrament of baptism. Janae is the daughter of Laurel and Frank Callens. Congratulations to Janae and to her family.

Our Stitch & Pray Prayer Shawl ministry knitted a prayer shawl for Janae in honor of her baptism. The shawl was presented at the baptism. Many thanks to the Prayer Shawl team for carrying out this important ministry among us!

Congratulations Jean Koh Peters

Jean Koh Peters, daughter of Hesung Koh, who grew up in our congregation, has been appointed the Sol Goldman Clinical Professor of Law at the Yale Law School. A professor at the school for many years, her inaugural lecture on Monday, January 24 at Yale Law School was titled "Dignity, Voice, Story". Congratulations to Jean and her family.

Thanks to Bob LaCamera for sharing this news.

Ushers & Worship Leaders Update

Would you like to be an usher? Dru Cherry, Usher Chair, would love to get you involved. Talk to her at Fellowship Hour, or look her up in the church directory.

If you'd like to volunteer as a worship leader, please sign up with Bob Hancock on Sundays after worship.

News from MIND

Methodists in New Directions

MIND

Saturday, April 30th, 12pm-3pm
Memorial UMC, White Plains, NY

Join us!

General Meeting for all who are interested in working for a fully inclusive UMC. Come for fellowship, worship, and organizing!
www.mindny.org

INTRODUCTIONS

FSUMC is a part of a coalition of New Haven area congregations addressing wintertime homelessness through Interfaith Cooperative Ministries, Inc., and Columbus House, Inc. Our week to provide a ministry of hospitality is February 14 to 20. We will welcome 12 men from the shelter into Trinity Hall for a good meal, fellowship, and a warm night's sleep. Columbus House provides transportation, cots, and staff oversight to make this program a success. ICM encourages and enlists congregations in the Greater New Haven area to become involved.

This is the second year that ICM and Columbus House have coordinated this effort to alleviate homelessness during the coldest months of the year in the face of serious budget cuts in local and state funding.

FSUMC's coordinators are Ad Tucker and Nancy Davis. If you'd like to help, but haven't signed up yet, please contact Ad or Nancy to find out what still needs doing!



Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

Matthew 25:40

Getting Ready for our Week

Food donations are needed for breakfast: breakfast cereals (cold and instant); orange juice; coffee; breakfast rolls/cakes; milk. Other snacks, chips, pretzels, and fruit are needed for evenings. Please bring donations on Sundays and leave in the donation box in the Trinity Hall kitchen. Board games and card games are welcome, too!

ALL food service and overnight hosts volunteers **MUST** attend a training session the week before we host our guests, so please stay tuned as we get that scheduled with Columbus House staff.

Sunday, February 13, we will set up Trinity Hall for Abraham's Tent. If you're able to help carry some furniture from the Parlor to Trinity Hall, please let Ad know. Many hands make light work! Curtains need to be hung too!

Many thanks to our neighbors who will be assisting with

Here's the schedule of Volunteers, as of Jan. 23, 2011. Any changes or updates should be made with Ad Tucker and Nancy Davis, not the church office or the Pastor. Many thanks to all of you for volunteering and to Ad and Nancy for getting us organized!

All meal teams are needed by 5:30pm to prepare for dinner. Guests arrive by 6pm. Overnight Hosts arrive at 6pm. Guests leave by 6am, overnight hosts clean up, lock up, and depart by 7am.

Monday, Feb. 14
Meal: Rachel D, Jerry R.
Hosts: Margery D., Jerry R.

Tuesday, Feb. 15
Meals: Quaker Friends
Hosts: Maureen L, Dwight L, Carl P.
Bag Lunches: Modestine (delivered previous night)

Wednesday, Feb. 16
Meals: Yale Chaplain's Office
Hosts: TBA, see Nancy Davis
Bag Lunches: Woodbridge (delivered previous night)

Thursday, Feb. 17
Meals: Woodbridge, Wanda H, Dru C
Hosts: Katie S, James H.
Bag Lunches; Woodbridge (delivered previous night)

Friday, Feb. 18
Meals: Jean L, Joan B.
Hosts: Jerry Rowley, TBA
Bag Lunches: Woodbridge (delivered previous night)

Saturday, Feb. 19
Meals: Clinton UMC
Hosts: Chris L-S, TBA. Please make room for Fellowship Hour the following morning.
Bag Lunches: Maureen L. (delivered previous night)

Sunday, Feb. 20
Meals:
Hosts: Woodbridge
Bag Lunches: Modestine V. (delivered previous night)

Monday, Feb. 21
Clean up team coordinated by Ad, cleans Trinity Hall and the Kitchen.
Move furniture back to Parlor: Need volunteers

Have a wonderful week of hospitality ministry!

ECUMENICAL BED FUNDS

Did you know that FSUMC is part of the Yale New Haven Hospital Ecumenical Bed Funds? More than a century ago, local congregations endowed beds at the hospital for those who were ill. At the time, this was a kind of health insurance, since all medical expenses were out-of-pocket back then!

These congregations then decided to move their funds into an endowed fund, managed by Yale New Haven Hospital. First Methodist Episcopal Church was one of these congregations. So, today, FSUMC can nominate a congregation member who is unable to pay their hospital bill to the Ecumenical Bed Fund for financial assistance. Please talk to the pastor about receiving Bed Fund assistance. All applications are confidential.

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2010 Year End Stats

Average worship attendance for all Sunday services in 2010: 52

Average worship attendance for all service, including Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Sengbe Pieh Awards, Christmas Eve: 49

For UM Special Sundays this fall, we raised \$438 for World Communion Sunday in October and \$248.15 for UM Student Day in November.

The Innisbrook Wrapping Paper Fundraiser raised \$570.71, after expenses. These funds were contributed to the Current Expenses of the Church. Thank you for your efforts!

The UMM Christmas Dinner raised \$429. Many thanks to the men for a wonderful celebration—our guys are great chefs! The funds were contributed to Current Expenses.

The Annual Christmas Gift to the Church raised: \$2045. Many thanks to our generous donors.

December Donations to the Larry Anderson Fund totaled \$236. These funds are transferred to the Trustees for investment in the Anderson Fund. Thank you for your generous support!

DIMCHEX SPECIAL OFFERING, Feb. 13

On Sunday, Feb. 13th, we will receive a special offering for DIMCHEX, or the CT District Mission and Extension Society. Chaired by Rev. Marjorie Nunes, Summerfield UMC, Bridgeport, DIMCHEX is a mission funding organization unique to the CT district of the New York Annual Conference. DIMCHEX has aided FSUMC with funding for campus ministry for the last few years. DIMCHEX receives grant applications from UM Churches in our District every fall for new ministry initiatives, missions, and outreach. Over the years, the Committee's support of FSUMC has been vitally important. Let's take a Sunday to give back and help other congregations in the District. Make your check payable to FSUMC, "Dimchex" in the memo.

ASH WEDNESDAY

March brings the season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday worship on March 9th. Lent is a 40-day period for reflection to revitalize spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, and daily scripture study. Let us join together for a meaningful worship service to begin our Lenten journeys. Maggie and John Carr will lead our worship on March 9th at 7pm.



Sengbe Pieh Community Service Awards

The 10th Annual Sengbe Pieh Awards Ceremony will be held on Sunday, March 27th, at 3pm, with a reception to follow.

The awards are in recognition of individuals who have made a significant contribution to the general welfare of the community through their generous public service acts. This year's awardees are Olga Felix-Rodriguez and Ruth and Sam Teitleman.

Olga is a counselor at Hill Central High School, known for her good listening skills and her compassion for teens, children, and adults. Ruth and Sam Teitleman have long been advocates for the mentally retarded and physically challenged people in our area and in our state.

Come celebrate this generous, community-minded, caring individuals on March 27, at 3pm.

SENGBE PIEH DONATIONS

Can you assist with this important program? Your assistance is vital to a successful event of this type.

1. This year we are not soliciting ads. Instead, become a "sponsor" for this event, to help us meet our budget goal of \$500 to cover expenses. A suggested donation is \$25.00. If you can give more, wonderful. If you cannot give \$25.00, can you give \$5.00 or more? Your name will be listed on the program but not disclosing the amount. Makes checks payable to FSUMC with "Sengbe Pieh" in the memo. 2. Can you solicit donations from the greater community? 3. Can you help with the reception? 4. Can you help with publicity? 5. Can you help with printing the program? 6. Can you help the committee with other tasks?

Please let the committee/church know of your availability or task you can help the committee accomplish.

Health Kits for Haiti - Please help Pastor Sara, Van Selden, Jerry Rowley and Kara Scroggins collect donations for the March 7-14, 2011 Haiti Early Response Team trip

Here's what needs to be in a health kit.

Place these items inside a sealed one-gallon plastic bag and leave in the donation basket at the door to the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings.

- 1 hand towel (15" x 25" up to 17" x 27", no kitchen towels)
- 1 washcloth
- 1 comb (large and sturdy, not pocket-sized)
- 1 nail file or fingernail clippers (no emery boards or toenail clippers)
- 1 bath-size bar of soap (3 oz. and up)
- 1 toothbrush (single brushes only in original wrapper, no child-size brushes)
- 1 tube of toothpaste



Same-Sex Marriage Initiative: Congregational Conversation, Jan. 9, 2011



FSUMC Congregational Agreement on the Marriage Covenant of Conscience

On Sun. Jan 9, Church Council called our congregation to a conversation about the Methodists In New Directions (MIND) Marriage Initiative, as laid out in a Covenant of Conscience, which seeks local United Methodist congregations to sign on to promise that our pastor, congregation, and church building are open to "marriage equality", i.e. to celebrate marriage of same-sex couples. The consensus vote on this question by members present was YES.

For about the past 15 years, our church has been a "Reconciling Congregation" (that is, signing on to the Reconciling Ministries Network, a movement of United Methodist congregations, of which MIND is the New York Annual Conference branch). This position is our promise that, as in our mission statement printed in each Sunday's bulletin and available on our web site, www.fsumc.org, with open hearts, minds and doors we welcome all God's children, including non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. We believe this welcome includes participation in all the sacraments and rituals of the church, not just some of them. Although the official United Methodist position, as stated in the Book of Discipline, does not permit same-sex marriages in UM churches or by UM pastors, many UM congregations, including the majority of those in the New York Annual Conference (NYAC), of which our church is a member, believe that this position is contrary to the love of God as exemplified through Christ. In 2008, MIND presented to NYAC an open letter on marriage equality, which begins with the following:

Marriage is an important covenantal relationship recognized and supported by the church, but in its doctrine and policies the United Methodist Church wrongly excludes lesbian and gay people from this recognition and support.

Wherever people come together to grow as people of faith, God gives recognition and support. What matters to God is not who comes together, but why. The Gospel proclaims an unrelenting message of welcome in God's kingdom for the unexpected, the outcast, the marginalized. And yet the United Methodist Church denies gay and lesbian people the right to marry in God's name. The Church must aspire to God's extravagant welcome.

This document was then signed by over 500 clergy and lay members of NYAC, including our present and former pastors. The votes taken by our Church Council and at our congregational meeting now commit our church to celebration of marriage for all couples who seek marriage covenant under God through Christ, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Please see www.mindny.org for related documents and statements, including the texts of the Covenant of Conscience and the open letter on marriage equality (God Honors All Covenantal Relationships – Why Not The Church?), both of which are also posted on bulletin boards in our church.

-written by Marion Sachdeva, on behalf of the Church Council and the attendees of the congregational conversation on Jan. 9, 2011.



Sign up for a Sunday to help set up, serve, and clean up for Fellowship Hour. A sign up list is posted on the Kitchen door in Trinity Hall. Supplies are available in the storage closets and the kitchen, all you need to do is start the coffee and tea water, and get the snacks and paper goods out on the serving tables. It's a simple way to help FSUMC provide a warm and hospitable welcome to guests and members every Sunday. Come be a part of the hospitality ministry today! Talk to Gabby Pianka for more information.

What's Happening at First and Summerfield UMC

SUNDAYS: Join us every Sunday at 10:00 am for our Weekly Worship Service, with Child Care;
Food pantry donations are received for DESK

MONDAYS: Pray for Peace at our Peace Vigil held at Noon

1st TUESDAYS, Feb 1st, Mar 1st, 5:30pm Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, 311 Temple St., 1st & 3rd
Tuesdays

THURSDAYS: 7:15pm Choir rehearsal. Ring College Street Church Office buzzer to enter

Dates to Remember

Feb 6	11:30am Sengbe Pieh Committee Meeting
Feb 13	11:15am, Set up for Abraham's Tent in Trinity Hall
Feb 14-20	Abraham's Tent, 6pm to 7am each night
Feb 15	7:05pm, Disciple II begins meeting weekly
Feb 18	6pm-9pm Hazel Pappas recognition dinner, West Haven, CT
Feb 20	11:30am New Members' Meeting, Parlor
Feb 22	7:05pm Disciple II
Feb 27	10am New Members Sunday
Mar 1	7:05pm Disciple II
Mar 5	Black College Luncheon, White Plains, NY
Mar 7-14	Haiti Volunteers in Mission Earthquake Relief trip
Mar 9	7pm Ash Wednesday worship

OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesdays & Wednesdays
10am-3pm
Thursdays, 3:15pm-5:15pm



*FSUMC: An inclusive,
diverse, and reconciling
congregation.*

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